

How to keep your family safe

Doctors urge you to carefully consider the following risks of keeping a gun in your home. If after reading this material, you feel you need to keep a gun in your home, please:

- ✓ Keep the gun unloaded
- ✓ Use a trigger lock or “gun safe” designed to prevent unauthorized users from gaining access to the weapon
- ✓ Lock the gun and the ammunition in separate places
- ✓ Remove guns from a home where depressed individuals or children can use them
- ✓ Ask neighbors and relatives whether guns are kept in their homes and how they are stored if vulnerable members of your family might have access to them



Why having a gun in the home is dangerous

Doctors treat the victims of gun violence every day. We want to reduce the number of deaths and injuries and prevent you and your family from being a statistic.

- **16,599 Americans used a gun to commit suicide in 1999**

While suicidal thoughts may be fairly constant, the decision to act on those thoughts is usually brief – often fading within just a few seconds or minutes. If a gun is available, that is enough time for thought to turn to action.

- **10,828 Americans died in firearm homicides in 1999**

The presence of a gun in the home triples the risk of homicide and increases the risk of suicide fivefold.¹

- **824 Americans died from unintentional firearm incidents during 1999**

Research shows that educational programs designed to teach children not to touch guns do not work. If kids find guns, they usually play with them. Such play can quickly turn deadly.

- **Firearms are the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults**

Guns kept in the home can threaten the health and safety of the family, especially if they are not stored securely.



- **4,905 Americans under the age of 21 died from firearm injuries in 1999 – that's 13 kids each day**

Although guns can be used for self-defense...

- **For every time a gun in the home is used in self-defense, there are 22 criminal, unintentional or intentional self-inflicted shootings²**

The data suggest that the risks of a gun in the home, especially a handgun, outweigh any benefits.

Source of suicide, homicide, unintentional death data: WISQARS Injury Mortality Report, CDC, downloaded April 3, 2002.

1 “Suicide in the Home in Relation to Gun Ownership,” New England Journal of Medicine, 1992

2 “Injuries and Deaths due to Firearms in the Home,” Journal of Trauma, 1998.

If you need more information about protecting your family from firearm injury, you may want to contact the police, a gun store, the National Rifle Association, or Doctors Against Handgun Injury.



Our mission is to reduce the number of deaths and non-fatal injuries from handguns.



**DOCTORS AGAINST
HANDGUN INJURY**

We are a coalition of twelve clinical and professional medical societies, organized and sponsored by the New York Academy of Medicine. Hundreds of thousands of the doctors practicing in the United States are members of these societies.

We seek to bring our collective experience and expertise as physicians to bear on the problem of handgun injury. We don't want to prevent anyone legally entitled to own a handgun from having one. But we believe that 28,000 deaths a year constitutes a public health emergency. And we know that adding a clinical and prevention-based perspective can help reduce handgun-related deaths and injuries.

For more information or to get copies of this brochure please contact Doctors Against Handgun Injury or visit our web-site.

**Doctors Against Handgun Injury
The New York Academy of Medicine**

**1216 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10029
212 822-7377**

dahi@nyam.org

www.doctorsagainsthandinjury.org

Member Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for the Surgery
of Trauma

American College of Emergency Physicians

American College of Physicians/American
Society of Internal Medicine

American College of Preventive Medicine

American College of Surgeons

American Medical Women's Association

Eastern Association for the Surgery
of Trauma

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Medical Association

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Society of Critical Care Medicine

Doctors Against Handgun Injury is sponsored by
The New York Academy of Medicine and funded
by the Joyce Foundation.



Produced by Network Communications
Designed and printed by the Network Print Shop, Bath VA Medical Center
Printed with the permission of Doctors Against Handgun Injury

*Leading Health Care
In The 21st Century*



Is Your Family Safe?

**If you decide to keep a gun in your home you
should be aware of the risks and know
how to minimize those risks.**

Please read this brochure and learn how to

Keep Your Family Safe



**DOCTORS AGAINST
HANDGUN INJURY**

